

Nooksack language

The **Nooksack language** (*Lhéchalosem*, or *Lhéchelesem*) is a Salishan language spoken by the Nooksack people of the Pacific Northwest Coast. It comes from the area now known as northwestern Washington state in the United States, centered in Whatcom County.

The Nooksack language has one fluent speaker as of 2020.^[2]

Nooksack is most closely related to Squamish, Sháshíshálhem (Sechelt) and Halkomelem, which are all spoken in nearby parts of British Columbia, Canada. Some researchers have questioned whether the Nooksack language is simply a divergent dialect of Halkomelem, but research has proved that Nooksack is in fact a distinct language.^[4]

Nooksack	
	Lhéchalosem
Region	Whatcom County, Washington
Ethnicity	1,600 Nooksack people (1997) ^[1]
Extinct	1988, with the death of Sindick Jimmy ^[1]
Revival	1 fluent L2 speaker in 2020 ^[2]
Language family	Salish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coast Salish ▪ Central ▪ Nooksack
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	nok
Glottolog	nook1247 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/nook1247) ^[3]

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Usage and revitalization efforts

In the 1970s, the Salishan linguist Brent Galloway worked closely with the last remaining native speaker, Sindick Jimmy, who died in 1988. He was compiling a dictionary of the language, and his book, *Nooksack place names: geography, culture, and language*, appeared in 2011. The Nooksack tribe has offered classes in the language.^[5] As of 2020, one fluent speaker remained, a Nooksack tribal member who has been part of the Lhéchalosem Teacher Training Language Immersion Project.^{[2][5]}

Students will spend mornings in language immersion, and afternoons working on special projects, focusing on the language use in one aspect of local native culture such as fishing or crafts. After two years, the students will obtain a certificate similar to an Associate Degree, and after four years they will be fully qualified language teachers, with the equivalent of a Bachelor of Arts. The aim is to revive the use of the Lhéchalosem language in all aspects of daily life. The program has an annual budget of \$110,000, with 60 percent funded by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) and 40 percent funded by the Nooksack Tribe.^[6]

Phonology

Vowels

The following table includes all the vowel sounds found in the Nooksack language.

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		
Mid		θ, ə	o
Open	æ	a	

Consonants

The following table includes all the consonant sounds found in the Nooksack language.

		Bilabial	Alveolar		Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar		Uvular		Glottal	
			central	lateral			plain	rounded	plain	rounded		
Stop	plain	p	t				k	kʷ	q	qʷ	?	
	ejective	p'	t'					kʷ'	q'	qʷ'		
Affricate	plain		ts		ts'	ts'						
	ejective				tʃ'	tʃ'						
Fricative	plain		s	tʃ		ʃ		x	xʷ	x	xʷ	h
	ejective			tʃ'								
Nasal		m	n									
Approximant	plain			l		j		w				
	glottalized					j'						

Orthography

(di)graph	sound	(di)graph	sound
a	æ	qw	qʷ
ch	tʃ	qw'	qʷ'
ch'	tʃ'	s	s
e	ə	sh	ʃ
h	h	t	t
i	i	t'	t'
k	k	ts	ts
kw	kʷ	ts'	ts'
kw'	kʷ'	tʃ'	tʃ'
l	l	u	ə
lh	tʃ	w	w
lh'	tʃ'	x	x
m	m	xʷ	xʷ
n	n	χ	χ
o	o	xʷ	xʷ
p	p	y	j
p'	p'	y'	j'
q	q	?	?
q'	q'		

In addition, the diacritic ":" indicates that the preceding sound is long (e.g. m:, a:). An acute accent (') is placed on the accented syllable.

References

1. Nooksack (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/nok/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hu, Jane C (2020-02-01). "One woman took a stand against tribal disenrollment and paid for it" (<https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.2/indigenous-affairs-one-woman-took-a-stand-against-tribal-disenrollment-and-paid-for-it-nooksack>). *High Country News*. Retrieved 2020-02-11.
3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Nooksack" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/nook1247>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. Galloway, Brent D. (1984). "A Look at Nooksack Phonology". *Anthropological Linguistics*. 26 (1): 13–41. JSTOR 30027696 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/30027696>).
5. "Nooksack program revives a nearly extinct language" (https://web.archive.org/web/20141127034620/http://www.turtletrack.org/Issues02/Co02232002/CO_02232002_Nooksack.htm). Canku Ota. 2002-02-23. Archived from the original (http://www.turtletrack.org/Issues02/Co02232002/CO_02232002_Nooksack.htm) on 2014-11-27. Retrieved 2013-09-15.
6. Adkinson, Brita. "Revitalization project hopes to revive Nooksack language" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20101217163152/http://foothillsgazette.com/2010/02/14/nooksack-language-to-be-passed-on-through-revitalization-project/>). *Foothills Gazette*. Archived from the original (<http://foothillsgazette.com/2010/02/14/nooksack-language-to-be-passed-on-through-revitalization-project/>) on 2010-12-17. Retrieved 2013-09-15.

- Nooksack Tribe page (<https://web.archive.org/web/20140714155941/http://www.nooksacktribe.org/>)
- Richardson, Allan (2011). *Nooksack place names: geography, culture, and language*. Vancouver: UBC Press. ISBN 9780774820455.

External links

- Vocabulary Words in Native American Languages: Nooksack (http://www.native-languages.org/nooksack_words.htm)
- OLAC resources in and about the Nooksack language (<http://www.language-archives.org/language/nok>)

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